

Changes to Improve MaineCare Member's Access to Healthcare Services during the COVID-19 Emergency

Updated on April 24, 2023

At the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, the federal DHHS declared a public health emergency and relaxed certain rules to make sure you could still get the health care you needed.

The federal government announced that the Public Health Emergency (PHE) will end on May 11, 2023. **This means that, starting May 12, 2023, there may be some changes to how you access health care services as things go back to how they used to be.** For details about what is changing on May 12, 2023, see the [End of the PHE Member Letter](#).

All the information below remains accurate through May 11, 2023.

What mandate helps me access care during the Public Health Emergency (PHE)?

On March 31, 2020, Governor Janet Mills issued a “Stay Healthy At Home Mandate.” This mandate requires people living in Maine to stay at home at all times unless for an essential job or an essential personal reason, such as obtaining food, medicine, health care, or other necessary purposes. For more information, including the Executive Order, please see the [Office of the Governor Janet T. Mills webpage](#).

During the Public Health Emergency (PHE), changes for MaineCare members include:

- **MaineCare temporarily removed copays** to improve access to care during the Public Health Emergency (PHE). With the unwinding of the PHE, **copays will be reinstated** for prescriptions and pharmacy services, office visits, clinical visits, hospital care, medical imaging and radiology services, labs, home health services, personal support services, behavioral health services, and medical supplies and Durable Medical Equipment (DME).
 - Members should expect to pay \$0.50- \$3.00 out-of-pocket for these services. Please call MaineCare Member Services at 1-800-977-6740 to determine your copay.
- **Non-payment of monthly premiums** for Cub Care (CHIP), Special Benefits Waiver, Katie Beckett, and MaineCare for working people with disabilities will end. Failure to pay premiums may result in coverage losses.
 - Additional federal financial assistance has been extended through 2025 through CoverME.gov to help pay for premiums.
- **Ensuring you have the medications you need** by allowing early refills of prescriptions, allowing a 90-day prescription supply, extending Prior Authorization (PA) periods for prescriptions, waiving initial PA requirements for asthma and immune-related drugs, and allowing prescribing through telehealth.

- **Helping you stay safe in your home** if you have or are at high risk for COVID-19 by extending PAs for certain DME, and by extending the time that Home Health providers have to submit Plans of Care.
- MaineCare members will **not** be charged for a COVID-19 vaccination, test, or treatment. See the documents below for more information.
- **Allowing MaineCare providers to bill for telehealth services** so that patients are seen in-person as medically appropriate.
- **Non-Emergency Transportation (NET) services will continue**, and if someone is sick with symptoms of COVID-19, is suspected of having COVID-19, or has tested positive for COVID-19, special transportation arrangements will be made to reduce exposure to other MaineCare members and NET drivers.

Contact 211 Maine for answers to frequently asked questions about COVID-19. This resource is TTY and Video Relay accessible if calling from Maine.

- Dial 211(or 1-866-811-5695)
- Text your ZIP code to 898-211
- Email: info@211maine.org